

Mentorship in the Military--

Not everybody gets it.

Overview and Recommendations for the Individual

By

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Mentorship in the Military-- Not everybody gets it.¹

“Marshall, MacArthur, Eisenhower, and Patton spent their entire military careers preparing for high command through study and through working as junior officers for the most outstanding [officers]—Marshall and Patton for John J. Pershing, Eisenhower under the tutelage of Fox Conner and Douglas MacArthur, and MacArthur through the most unique exposure of them all, his father, Arthur MacArthur.”

“Regardless of how able a leader may be, he will not achieve a position of top responsibility unless his ability is recognized by senior officers. ... [Mentorship] is a part of success, and it should not offend anyone when it is understood that it goes only to those who study, who prepare, and who produce.”

“A total of 160 members of the Benning faculty and Infantry School students who caught Marshall’s eye at the time became general officers in World War II.”

From the book, 19 Stars: A Study in Military Character and Leadership by Edgar F. Puryear, Jr.²

Introduction

Do you have a mentor?

If not...why not?

This paper provides a method for deciding how and when to enter a mentoring relationship. It breaks down each step in seeking a mentor and provides the rationale for why mentoring is rewarding. Mentorship is far more than just teaching or coaching. It is about trust, friendship and in the end--- wisdom.

¹ The author wishes to thank the time and effort from the following people that made significant contributions to the ideas and style in this paper. I am indebted to them all: LTG (R) Tad Oelstrom, Prof. David King, BG Rick Lynch, COL Robert W. Cone, Kathy Kram, CPT Patrick Buckley, LTC Bill Gallagher, CPT Thomas Sutton, and Michael T. Chong.

² Edgar F. Puryear, *Nineteen Stars*, (Washington, D.C: Coiner Publications, 1971)

The Recommendation

There are five steps in the lifelong learning process that a person can take to increase the benefits mentorship can have in his or her personal and professional career.

Those steps are:

- 1. Become aware of your strengths and weaknesses**

A serious self-assessment can maximize the benefits of mentorship for a person. To have a firm grasp on strengths and weaknesses allows a person to align himself with coaches, mentors, and sponsors that can serve to fill in the gaps in a person's leader development process.

- 2. Understand your potential mentor—then seek him or her out**

Not everyone has the personality best suited for a mentoring relationship. In fact, a person should select from the people in his/her everyday life to match against developmental needs. Some relationships will serve the career needs, while others will serve psychosocial needs. Whether it is hands on instruction or a pat on the back, it is impossible to find just one person to meet all the requirements. Be selective and recognize who takes the time to help develop others.

- 3. Work to maintain the relationship as it progresses**

A mentor will distinguish herself from an acquaintance with the passage of time. It is the responsibility of the protégé to make the effort to maintain a relationship. To prevent a relationship from stagnating, correspondence, updates, or even e-mails must occur. If a relationship does stagnate, there is no chance for it to move further, unless someone, generally the protégé pushes the relationship forward.

- 4. Observe mentoring Rules of Engagement ROE/Etiquette**

Loyalty is a critical component for a mentorship to occur. If the commitment stops at the commander's door, the relationship will not flourish. A mentorship can require a tremendous amount of time and energy. It is naïve to believe that a mentor would continue to invest the effort if there were any sense of insincerity on behalf of the protégé.

- 5. Transition yourself as a mentor for others**

Leader development is a life long process. At any point in a career, a person can assume the role of mentor or protégé. By fostering an environment that promotes mentorship, leaders can increase the effectiveness of any organization. By encouraging voluntary participation, a unit can build the social capital needed to maximize the potential of all its members. Mentorship is the bedrock by which all others tenets of leader development occur. Mentorship ties it all together.

This paper will not convince the reader that mentorship should be mandatory. On the contrary, it is a voluntary act initiated from a desire to do better. In the paper, there are quotes that highlight themes and questions that stimulate self-assessment. The questions should challenge a person to find application in his or her own career. The paper follows the below outline taking the reader through a systematic process for evaluating the quality of mentorship in his/her professional career.

The Five Steps of Mentorship

1. Awareness
2. Potential Mentors
 - a. Terms
 - b. Functions
 - c. Context
 - d. Diversity
3. Maintenance
4. Rules of Engagement
5. Future Transition

History is rich with examples of successful leaders participating in mentoring relationships. Leaders in military, government, and industry attribute names of people who were great role models, inspirations, coaches, and guides during different stages of their careers. The life of Secretary of State Colin Powell provides a great case study. At various stages in career, General (Retired) Powell learns from a great number of persons both as a mentor and as a protégé.³ At the military highlight of his career, General George C. Marshall reflected on the vast number of officers that had served under him or near him that he later handpicked to help lead American armed forces in WWII.⁴ Despite some perceived negative aspects, there are many positive aspects as well.

During exhaustive research in the U.S. Army, Lieutenant General William Steele reported to the Army Chief of Staff that mentorship and retention are related. The report stated that younger

On the importance of mentorship—

“The first mentors I had in my life were of course my parents and relatives. It is from my family that I learned to do the right things in life and stay away from the bad things down on the street corner. After that I had many mentors in the Army -- some were presidents and generals, but many of them were sergeants and junior officers who taught me to be a good soldier...”

General (Retired) Colin L. Powell
U.S. Secretary of State

officers felt a lack of “a commensurate commitment from the Army to them.”⁵ When relationships progress from purely professional to a more personal aspect, there is a greater chance of officers receiving that fulfillment or “commitment” that they currently lack.

³ Colin Powell with Joseph Persico, *My American Journey*, (New York: Random House, 1995); General Colin Powell, Transcript of Monster.com discussion with General (Ret.) Colin L. Powell, leader of The Alliance for Youth, America's Promise. This discussion took place on Feb. 2, 2000, as part of Groundhog Job Shadow Day. <http://jobshadow.monster.com/communicate/genpowell/>

⁴ Mark A Stoler, *George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman of the American Century* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989)

⁵ Lieutenant General William M Steele, Army Training and Leader Development Panel Report (Officers). A report submitted to the Army Chief of Staff, Washington, D.C. 20310, OS-9. May 2001.

Awareness

Potential Mentors
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Step 1- Become aware of your strengths and weaknesses

There are certain steps that must occur for a person to move through all stages of a classical mentorship. The first step follows the basic principle of leadership—know yourself and seek self-improvement. The self-assessment step is the first and probably hardest step.

In the Harvard Business Review Classic, “Managing Your Boss,” authors John P. Gabarro and John P. Kotter explain, “Gaining this level of self-awareness and acting on it are difficult but not impossible.”⁶

If a person cannot admit to any deficiencies, it is unlikely that he or she will ever into a mentorship relationship. Likewise, if a person is a poor judge of leaders above him or her, it is equally unlikely that a person will enter a quality mentor relationship.

Gabarro and Kotter provide three areas to self-assess your needs:⁷

- ❑ Strengths and weaknesses
- ❑ Personal style
- ❑ Predisposition toward dependence on authority figures

Young officers are often overly confident and do not see their weaknesses. Worse, many do not have a humbleness or humility to listen to the advice of others. Others dismiss senior-leaders as out of touch. Still others dismiss wise peers as know-it-alls. The fact remains that many people will never enter a mentorship because they have already limited themselves.⁸ In answering the question of why not everybody gets it, this is first hurdle.

On the benefits of mentors:

“Three people have had great impact on me: SFC Putnam, my first platoon sergeant, who taught me about positive leadership, technical competence, and caring for soldiers; General Harold K. Johnson, a former Chief of Staff who I once worked for, taught me about character, about “the personal in personnel,” and caring for families; and, finally, General Creighton Abrams, another former Chief of Staff, who taught me about the warrior ethic, open-mindedness, and innovation. I am thankful for their influence on me.”

General John A. Wickham, Jr.
Army Chief of Staff 1983-1987

⁶ John B. Gabarro and J. P. Kotter, “Managing Your Boss,” *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 58, (May-Jun 1993), 154.

⁷ Gabarro and Kotter, “Managing Your Boss,” 155

Self-awareness enables an officer to identify his or her strengths and weaknesses. An officer then begins to understand whether he needs help in a professional or personal context—or both. A common misunderstanding, though, is that a protégé has to identify one mentor in which to place all their loyalty. In fact, a person should be able to match strengths and weaknesses against multiple potential mentors⁹. She recognizes perhaps that her weakness is tactical rather than administrative. On the other hand, maybe an officer feels he has issues relating on a personal level to his subordinates.

Self-assessment-

Do you see a trend in your evaluations? Are you too “easy going” or are you criticized for being too “rough around the edges?”

On not having a mentor:

“We were impressed by the fact that even those admirals who had not been mentored often reported wishing they had been.”

W Brad Johnson, et al
United States Naval Institute Proceedings

The subordinate then must become a “first class noticer.” He or she must look around to determine who might fill those needs. Finding a potential mentor is necessary for moving to the next level in the relationship. A study done by Kolditz at West Point indicates that some people have a certain “propensity” to seek out a mentoring relationship. Kolditz writes that there is a certain measure of “an individual’s liking for, confidence in, seeking of, and perceived utility of

feedback.”¹⁰ Some people will naturally seek out a relationship where there is a greater chance of receiving that feedback is important to your sense of self-awareness.

While one cannot prove that a career will suffer from a lack of mentoring, there are testimonials that demonstrate a regret in not seeking a mentor. During a survey of recently retired Navy Admirals, U.S. Naval Institute released in Proceedings journal a statement that found those surveyed who were *not* in a mentoring relationship regretted not having a mentor¹¹.

It is natural for people initially to resist the benefits of mentoring. Mentorship is often misunderstood and it is associated with apprenticeship. Some people assume that it is a negative form of favoritism. Brown nosing, playing politics, or schmoozing are

On overcoming negative stigma of viewing mentorship as “cloning:”

“We have to fight it and then rediscover it.”

GENERAL(R) Barry
McCaffery
Desert Storm Division Commander

⁸ See for example, W Brad Johnson, Jennifer M Huwe, Anne M Fallow, Rakesh Lall, et al, “Does mentoring foster success?” United States Naval Institute, Proceedings (Dec 1999) 44. Many officers shy away from mentoring relationships because of negative perceptions.

⁹ Linda Hill and Nancy Kamprath, “Beyond the Myth of the Perfect Mentor: Building a Network of Developmental Relationships,” Harvard Business School Case 9-941-096 (Rev. June 10, 1998) 13

¹⁰ Thomas A. Kolditz, Scott A. Peterson, and Heidi H. Graham, “Feedback Seeking Behavior and the Development of Mentor-Protégé Relationships,” West Point, NY 5. (c.f. Herold et al (1996))

¹¹ W Brad Johnson, Jennifer M Huwe, Anne M Fallow, Rakesh Lall, et al, “Does mentoring foster success?” United States Naval Institute. Proceedings (Dec 1999) 44.

familiar phrases that relate to mentoring. Retired Army General Barry McCaffery counters the critics that mentorship is “cloning” our current leadership¹². There are even examples of military doctrine that speak in defensive terms such as Air Force Instruction, 36-3401, *Air Force Mentoring*. That manual defends mentorship: “Mentoring is not a promotion enhancement program.”¹³ Why is it a controversial subject for some people?

Step 2- Understand your potential mentor

—Then seek him or her out

Since all people are different, as are their leadership styles, a person must quickly gauge what each potential mentor might want from a protégé. While different mentors may expect different specific items, there are some very basic principles.

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<u>Potential Mentors</u>
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The following section on understanding your mentor contains four parts:

1. Basic terms and definitions used in mentorship
2. Functions a potential mentor will perform
3. Examination of mentoring in a military context
4. Seeking diversity in your potential mentors

Without a basic interest in the stories, anecdotes, or parables spoken by a mentor, a protégé is doomed from the start. You cannot fake interest for long. This is another common stopping point in the development of many relationships. If the mentor perceives that the protégé is not sincerely interested, the relationship will stagnate or dissolve. This also perpetuates the negative reputation of mentoring. It is brown nosing just to sit and act the part of a “yes-man.” Genuine interest is the stepping-stone to reach a two-way relationship for both parties to be interested in the other.

In that same tone, in certain cases a person will need to actively seek out a mentor. The level or degree of persistence is a function of the personality of both the mentor and protégé. Each person should have a good sense of whether the mentor is outgoing or reserved, talkative or quiet, etc...

As this paper progresses through the five steps, a person must understand where they fit into the larger picture in any organization. Potential mentors can come from many different sources. In any two person relationship, as Figure 2 demonstrates, a person is often just one spoke of another person’s larger network of associates, friends, and peers. Likewise, a protégé can benefit from understanding that he/she also is the central hub of a larger developmental network.¹⁴ Working “Beyond the Myth of the

¹² General (Retired) Barry McCaffery, interview with author regarding the merits and role of mentorship, Cambridge, Mass, 27 Nov 2001.

¹³ Department of the Air Force, *Air Force Mentoring*, Air Force Instruction, 36-34011, Headquarters USAF/DPDE (June 2000).

¹⁴ Monica C. Higgins and Kathy E Kram, “Reconceptualizing mentoring at work: A developmental network perspective,” Academy of Management. *The Academy of Management Review*, (Mississippi State, Apr 2001), 12

Perfect Mentor, “ Hill explains, “The constellation of developmental relationships an individual has can take many forms ... and include a wide range of people.”¹⁵

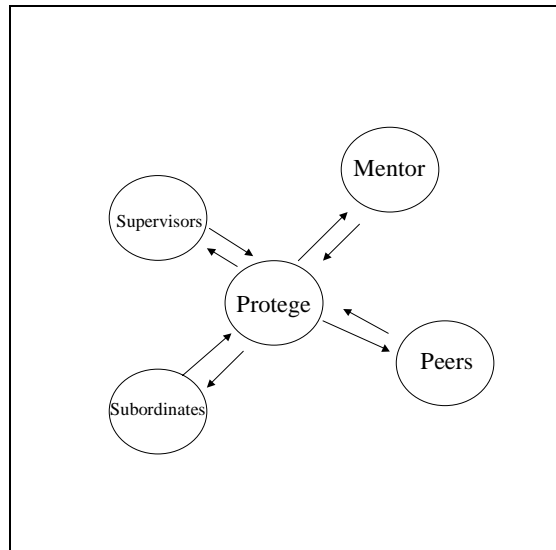


Figure 1- Full Range of Developmental Relationships

Instead of learning from just one mentor, a protégé can also learn from various sources all at the same time--- peers, subordinates, and supervisors. In fact, developmental learning can occur from several perspectives as shown in

Figure 1. General Patton in his career served as an excellent example of learning from all sources—mentors, peers, and subordinates. His son, Major General (Retired) George S. Patton, IV recalls:

My father was very enthusiastic about the link between people he knew [such as Pershing, T.E. Lawrence] and the current time. He liked to fill in those gaps by letting me know who these people were and how they affected his life. I did the same with my children when I could.¹⁶

When an officer begins to look around for a potential mentor, Gabarro and Kotter provide a very simple 4-point checklist to consider:¹⁷

- ☐ Goals and objectives
- ☐ Pressures
- ☐ Strengths, weaknesses, blind spots
- ☐ Preferred work style

¹⁵ Hill, “Beyond the Myth of the Perfect Mentor,” 5.

¹⁶ Sobel, *The Fighting Pattons*, 23.

¹⁷ Gabarro and Kotter, “Managing Your Boss,” 155

To some, the above checklist is going to taste bad in their mouth, but as General (Retired) Wes Clark admits, “personalities are important factors in history and military affairs, even though we don’t like to admit it.”¹⁸

Step 2. Part A- Basic terms and definitions used in mentorship

Be any further discussion, we should establish a clear set of terms and definitions for Mentorship.

According to Greek mythology, Mentor was an old friend of Odysseus and tutor to Odysseus' son Telemachus.¹⁹ Far more than just a coach, Odysseus also entrusted Mentor with the entire household while he was away at war. Recognizing the trust he commanded, Athena, the goddess of war, wisdom, skill and justice, sometimes appeared in the image of “Mentor” to pass on her wisdom to others.

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It cannot be stressed enough. The dual qualities of Mentor (both loyal *and* wise) make mentoring unique in education. Mentorship is not simply about gaining wisdom from someone wise and learned, but it is engaging first with a person that you know, trust, and feel genuine loyalty. Therefore, it is not just the old friend Mentor, but also the sage advice of Athena within him.

For mentorship in a military context, it is even harder to clearly define terms. Nowhere in the 614 pages of Joint Publication 1-02, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* does the Department of Defense define or even use the word “mentor.”²⁰ Among the services, there is a wide range of interpretations for what mentoring should be. The Air Force has mandated it in accordance with Air Force Instruction, 36-3401, *Air Force Mentoring*, 1 June 2000²¹. The Army is looking into it officially.²² Currently, FM 22-100 *Army Leadership* “defines [mentorship] and uses it extensively throughout the manual in a number of different ways.”²³ While it is

¹⁸ General (Retired) Wesley K. Clark, introduction to *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo and the future of combat*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2001)

¹⁹ Carlos Parada, <http://www.hsa.brown.edu/~maicar/Mentor4.html>, author of Genealogical Guide to Greek Mythology. Parada writes, “to [Mentor] Odysseus entrusted his household when he joined the coalition that sailed against Troy. Athena, assuming several times the shape of Mentor 4, became the guide of Odysseus' son Telemachus giving him prudent counsel. Since then, we call these people "mentors.””

²⁰ Joint Publication 1-02, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Department of Defense, 12 April 2001(As Amended Through 15 October 2001), http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf

²¹ United States Air Force, *Air Force Mentoring*, Air Force Instruction, 36-3401. (HQ USAF/DP: 1 June 2000), 1 “Mentor is defined as ‘a trusted counselor or guide.’ Mentoring, therefore, is a relationship in which a person with greater experience and wisdom guides another person to develop both personally and professionally.”

²² General Eric K Shinseki, “The Army Vision: A Status Report,” *The AUSA Green Book*, (OCT 2001). Army Chief of Staff General Shinseki listed as one of his imperatives, “Develop doctrine for mentoring in FM 6-22 (22-100), *Army Leadership*.”

²³ Lieutenant Colonel Gregg Martin, “Mentorship: Meaningful Leadership Concept, Confusing Cliché, or Euphemism for Favoritism?” working paper, (24 June 2001): 7; See also, US Army FM 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: GPO, July 1990 and August 1999)

excusable to accept differences in mentoring terminology between Fleet Bank and Chase Manhattan, it is not acceptable in a military context to allow a difference in terminology to exist in our armed services.²⁴ If we hope to have Joint Forces staffed with officers of different backgrounds and services, there at least must be a common language to avoid confusion—especially on evaluations.

Table 1 shows the specific labels we will attach to each person in a developmental relationship to distinguish between phases. For our discussion, **subordinate** and **coach** are the names given to participants in an early relationship. Most relationships start in a professional hierarchical setting and are characterized as one-way and more of a teaching and directing environment.

Table 1- Consistent Framework for Mentor Terms

<u>Stage of Relationship</u>	<u>Junior Participant</u>	<u>Senior Participant</u>
Initial	Subordinate	Coach
Interim	Protégé	Mentor
Final	Legacy	Sponsor

We will limit the use of **mentor** and **protégé** to only those relationships that move into a phase known as the “classical mentor” relationship. It is what we think of the two-way exchange and learning process.

Finally, to distinguish when a relationship has moved into the final stage, we will use the words **sponsor** and **legacy**. Immediately, there may be cause for controversy with choice of these two words, but there is a specific point in its use. As will we see later, in this third stage, relationships have moved into a very long-term chapter.

As discussed earlier, not every mentor can fulfill every developmental need. The next two sections break down the mechanics of a mentor into two comparable models. The Kram model in Section 2, Part B focuses on the functions of a mentor while the Martin model in Section 2, Part C focuses on mentorship in a military leader development timeline.

Step 2. Part B- The Functions of a Mentor

*The Developmental Functions of a coach, mentor or sponsor*²⁵

The first step in exploring the role of the mentor is to

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²⁴ Kathy Kram, interview with the author, Boston, MA, 5 Dec 2001. Prof Kram is professor at Boston University School of Management and author of over 19 books and published articles on developmental relationships. She states that private industry continues to use a wide variety of terms for defining mentorship and has common definition.

²⁵ Kram, Kathy E., *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life*, (Boston: University Press of America, 1988), 23

examine the various functions that a coach, mentor, or sponsor could serve. In the last 20 years, there has been extensive academic effort devoted to answering the question of just *what exactly* a mentor is doing for a protégée. Perhaps the best analysis is by Kathy E. Kram in 1985. Researchers and scholars cite Kram when describing the differences in roles and functions that a coach, mentor, or sponsor performs.

There are two functions that a coach, mentor or sponsor can serve over the course of a relationship: career functions and psychosocial functions. In broad terms, career functions are “those aspects of the relationship that enhance learning the ropes and preparing for advancement in an organization.”²⁶ Psychosocial functions are those “aspects of a relationship that enhance a sense of competence, clarity of identity, and effectiveness in a professional roles.”²⁷

Table 2- The Career Functions of a Coach, Mentor, or Sponsor

The
progression
of time



Career Functions	Definition
Coaching	Initial guidance and teaching
Exposure	Opportunity to perform
Protection	Shelter from harmful situations
Challenge	Given with a purpose
Sponsorship	Outward promotion of a protégé

Career Functions of a coach, mentor, or sponsor

Table 2 outlines the career functions of a coach, mentor, or sponsor. While the description of each is very simple, a general trend emerges. The five functions progress in a logical fashion. Upon initially meeting a subordinate, in any work relationship, there is a certain amount of **coaching** that occurs. In a military context, this a natural and mandatory function to ensure that subordinates have the minimum skills to perform their assigned duties. To demonstrate proficiency, subordinates require a certain amount of **exposure** on their own. Successful performance after an opportunity to prove competency and ability, allow a coach to gauge the merit of a person. This helps confirm whatever private or personal opinions may have already formed.

Once a superior decides that a subordinate shows potential, the relationship will move to a higher level. Like a mother with young chicks, the mentor may begin to **protect** the protégé from potentially damaging or harmful positions. This is apparent in the types of missions tasked or personnel assigned. The mentor to continues assessment of strengths and weaknesses--adding

Self-assessment-
Who in my organization
seems to take extra time to
explain the rationale behind
command decisions?
Who is actually teaching our
trade?

Self-assessment-
Is anyone “taking the heat” for
me when I mess up?
Is there a person in the unit that
steps up to help defend me when
I need it?

²⁶ Ibid, 22.

²⁷ Ibid, 22.

depth to the relationship.

Working in their best interest, mentor will **challenge** protégées to gauge their full potential. The protégé will thrive in command climates that tolerate innocent failure in the process of learning. True talent emerges when a mentor pushes a protégé through a whole series of different tests.

At some later point in the relationship after overcoming many successful challenges, the protégé earns a level of trust and respect from the mentor not previously present. At this special phase in the relationship, the sponsor puts enough trust in the competencies and character of the protégé to start attaching their own reputation to their protégé. **Sponsorship** of the younger officer's career begins and the two joined in a common linkage of trust, loyalty, and commitment.

The Psycho-Social Functions of a coach, mentor, or sponsor

Psychosocial functions include role modeling, acceptance/confirmation, counseling, and friendship. Like the career functions above, these functions follow a similar sequence as they develop in a relationship. Though they appear to be “career” oriented, these functions are unique because they tend to “carry over to other spheres of life.”²⁸ Finally, psychosocial functions start to introduce the concept of the “quality” of the relationship. While career functions tend to be more related to position and authority between the two individuals, psychosocial functions depend on a much more intangible quality between the mentor and protégé. This is the side of mentoring that is impossible to “mandate” as we will later spell out.

Table 3- The Psycho-Social Functions of a Mentor²⁹

The progression of time ↓	Psychosocial Functions	Definition
	Role Modeling	Serves as an example to others
	Acceptance and Confirmation	Emergence of the two-way respect
	Counseling	Expressing concern
	Friendship	Sincere concern for welfare of a person along with trust and respect

Role modeling occurs when a potential protégé recognizes something in a superior that appeals to his or her inner values. Common values such as family, work habits, leisure, and hobbies can inspire subordinates. Since it is one-way, this is the first event to occur in a relationship. Over time, the mentor may develop a sense that particular subordinates demonstrate a sincere interest and seem to pay attention more than others.

²⁸ Kram, *Mentoring at Work*, 32.

²⁹ The author compiled the table in a similar combination of the work of Kram, *Mentoring at Work*, blended with Hill, “Beyond the Perfect Mentor.” The author, again, proposes the concept of a natural chronological flow.

Acceptance and Confirmation functions are the next most likely functions a mentor will perform. These actions foster an even stronger two-way bond between the two individuals. Once a protégé understands that he lives under the “good graces” of a mentor, there is a much more likely chance for thoughtful discussion and exchange. The protégé has an increased chance of “telling it like it is.” The mentor benefits from a situation where a protégé is able to express candidly his/her reaction to a statement of a mentor. Both officers will grow.

Counseling is the next step in the psychosocial development of a relationship. Not to be confused with “leader development counseling” that is generally top driven evaluation, this use of the word is to “seek counsel.” The mentor and protégé engage in the honest expression of fears or worries combined with the serious discussion of professional development. It is the responsibility of the mentor to explore both sides of every issue—such as promotions. A mentor would serve to offer counsel when an officer struggles with decisions that might affect the remainder of his career.³⁰

Finally, a genuine **friendship** is likely to occur as the relationship grows over time. Though this is “rare” in a military context, it can occur without either party becoming completely aware. The increasing frequency of informal and non-work related events and occasions signal the development of the relationship into this final psychosocial function. Generally, the two are never really “peers.” However, at the later stages in the career and life of the sponsor, there is greater chance for the two to be “equals.” Especially as the former legacy moves on to even higher levels of personal and professional success.

Self-assessment-
Whom do I truly admire?
Do they know how much I respect
what they do?

Step 2. Part C- Mentorship from a Military context

While the Kram model developed from a civilian context, the Martin model developed in a military context. Army Lieutenant Colonel Gregg Martin breaks mentorship down into distinct categories.³¹ Written from an Army perspective, Martin points out that doctrine is not specific enough when defining “mentorship.” Leaders try to “prescribe” mentorship to solve a number of leader development issues. While this is a valid argument, most doctrine then goes on to define it too broadly or too rigidly.

The military experiences tremendous turnover of personnel in leadership positions. Proper understanding of the functions and phases of mentorship allow military leaders to compensate for the rapid turnover.

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³⁰ AFI 34-3601, *Air Force Mentoring*, 4.

³¹ Lieutenant Colonel Gregg Martin, “Mentorship: Meaningful Leadership Concept, Confusing Cliché, or Euphemism for Favoritism?” working paper, 24 June 2001, 1

Following an observable progression and development in a relationship, Martin uses the designators M1, M2, and M3 to delineate between the three stages of a relationship ship. Those stages are:

M1- Teaching, Coaching and Leading

M2- Long Term Professional and Personal Mentoring

M3- Strategic Mentoring

M1- Teaching, Coaching and Leading³²

The first type of mentoring, M1- Professional Mentoring as he calls it is the more traditional teaching, coaching, and training that occurs in any organization. **Coaching** is the most common career function that occurs in this first stage. The psychosocial function of **Role modeling** is also present as the subordinate looks around for potential mentors. All coach-subordinate relationships start in this M1-Professional Mentoring phase. Depending on personality, determination, and the value of perceived potential of both parties, only some relationships move forward to the next stage.

M2- Long-term Personal and Professional Mentoring³³

This phase of the Martin model more closely resembles the classic notion of the mentor. Now the two-way exchange moves to the next level. **Exposure** and **protection** go hand in hand, as the mentor seeks to develop potential while in the job. As the mentor confirms her trust in the protégé, the mentor will begin to **challenge** the protégé to get a full sense of the potential.

Likewise, the psychosocial functions mature as well. Once the subordinate feels a certain level of **acceptance** and **confirmation**, the relationship is better able to achieve its potential. The protégé begins to trust and understand the direction and advice given by the mentor. There begins process of **counseling** that occurs in both the professional and personal context. As the protégé opens up to a superior, the protégé raises issues of career and family with the mentor.

Together the psychosocial and career functions develop into this classical sense of a mentor-- a two-way exchange of mutual trust and respect not present before. Then, and only then, is the relationship at its strongest. Once a physical change occurs in the mentor-protégé relationship, a **separation** occurs that is hard to overcome. It takes a determined effort to stay in touch with each party. Unless the protégé performs maintenance on the relationship, it is likely that the two will grow distant--"former colleagues" or "my old coach." The

On the importance of M3-Strategic Mentorship-

"Today's subordinates will, after all, become the next generation of strategic leaders."

Army Leadership
FM 22-100

³² Martin, "Mentorship," 14.

³³ Martin, "Mentorship," 14.

relationship will go through *redefinition* (to be discussed further in a subsequent section) depending on the level of cordial friendship that occurred in the later stages of the M2 relationship. It will emerge even stronger before if there is a common set of values, style and interests. Otherwise, it is likely that the relationship will simply fade away.

M3- The Strategic Mentor³⁴

It is at this level that the Martin and Kram models tend to diverge from each other. The Martin model contends that M3-Strategic Mentoring occurs as mentors begin to “grow and groom future leaders.” Even Martin contends that this is not classical mentoring. In fact, he is correct, this is networking. Kram discusses the concept of *sponsorship* as a career function where a sponsor publicly stands behind a potential legacy and helps to move along his or her career.

It is at this stage that the waters become murky and there is increased chance for misuse or abuse of the term “mentorship.” Classical mentorship is a two-way relationship between two people with mutual interest and values in their professional and personal development. Networking is the management of multiple relationships for achieving a higher purpose. Networking involves many people in many systems. Mentorship involves two people. Figure 2 better illustrates the concept. It shows that any particular protégé is just one of possibly many other protégés that have contact with a common mentor.

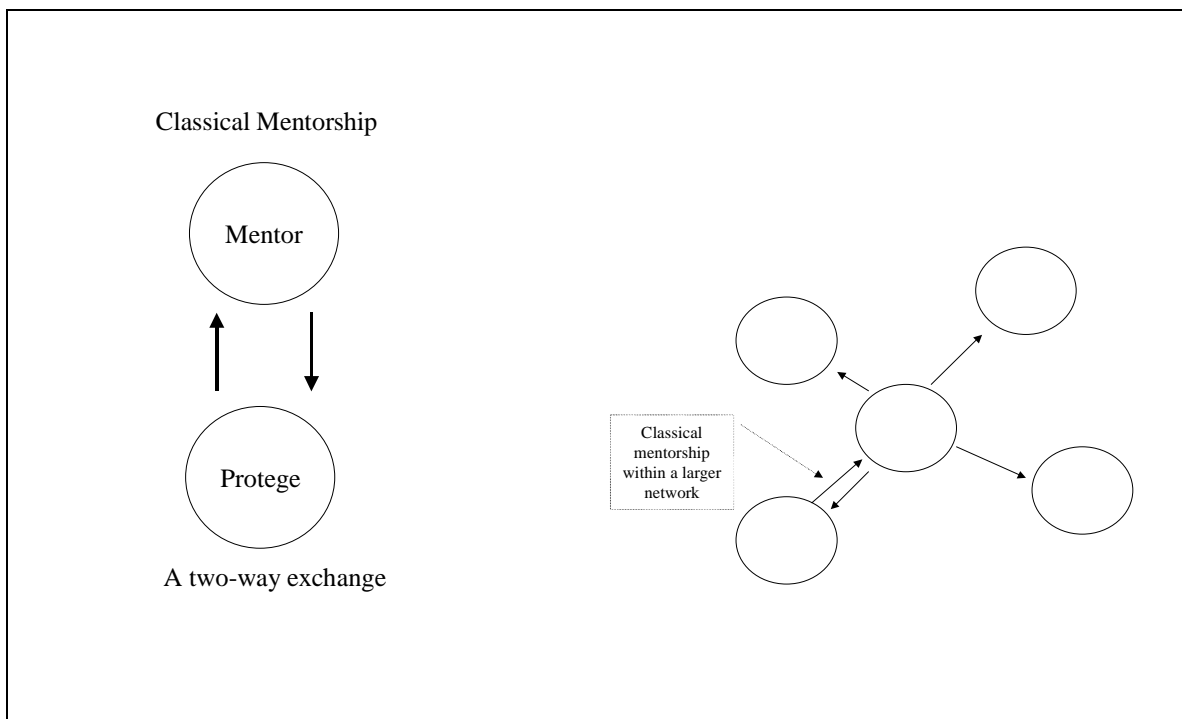


Figure 2- Interrelatedness of Mentoring and Networking

³⁴ Martin, “Mentoring,” 15

It is an all too common trap for young officers to believe that they can “network” their way to the top. A large Rolodex does not guarantee that a person has a developmental mentor. If that occurs, it is a manipulation of a person’s professional network, not a mentoring relationship.

A large Rolodex does not guarantee that a person has a developmental mentor.

Step 2. Part D- Recognize the importance of common values without shying away from diversity

This is a particularly challenging task for any potential protégé. It is easier to gravitate towards like kinds.³⁵ A person’s values will dictate the type of company they choose to associate with as well as the potential protégé’s they might adopt. Common beliefs of work ethic, political ideology, professional branch, and military service dominate the shared characteristics between mentor and protégé. In addition, relationships also tend to resemble each other in areas of race, gender, and sometimes religion.

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People criticize mentorship for simply “cloning” ideas and attributes. Research shows that homogeneous relationships tend to form easier because of natural comfort level.³⁶ Specifically, cross-racial and cross-gender relationships do tend to form barriers that might inhibit a fully developed mentor relationship. However, like any leader development environment, people should seek diversity and embrace it. There are very real factors to consider in a heterogeneous relationship. Specifically, there will be a tendency for others to view minority subordinates as “token” representatives of an entire minority group.³⁷ It is the responsibility of both parties to remember that scrutiny may occur and to overcome such treatment by addressing issues when they emerge.

By crossing traditional lines of branch, gender, race, and regional background, officers expand the framework for decision-making. By understanding problems from various angles, leaders tend to make decisions that are more thoughtful. The defense reorganization under the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 mandated a requirement for joint service before promotion to flag officer in the military³⁸. This Act recognized that

³⁵ Hill, “Beyond the Myth of the Perfect Mentor,” 10.

³⁶ Belle R. Ragins, “Diversified mentoring relationships in organizations: A power perspective,” *Academy of Management: The Academy of Management Review*, (Mississippi State, Apr 1997), 13

³⁷ Hill, “Beyond the Myth of the Perfect Mentor,” 11.

³⁸ From U.S. Code, TITLE 10, Subtitle A, PART II, CHAPTER 36, SUBCHAPTER II, Sec. 619a. - Eligibility for consideration for promotion: joint duty assignment required before promotion to general or flag grade; exceptions: (a) An officer on the active-duty list of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps may not be appointed to the grade of brigadier general or rear admiral (lower half) unless the officer has completed a full tour of duty in a joint duty assignment (as described in section 664(f) of this title). Found through the homepage: <http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/10/index.html>.

importance of spreading experience and understanding between services. An officer should understand the benefits of diversity in seeking out a potential mentor. For anyone in a group perceived as “out of power” there is a greater likelihood of exposure to the outcomes, language, and traditions of the “in-power” majority³⁹.

Now that a person has assessed his needs and identified a mentor, maintenance is required to sustain the relationship.

Step 3- Work to maintain the relationship as it progresses

To successfully manage a network of developmental relationships, it is critical to understand where each relationship exists at a given time. Since the responsibility for maintenance lies with the protégé, he/she must be able to identify at which stage a relationship has entered. Because a person will likely have multiple mentors, a person must be able to determine how to manage each and to recognize the unique characteristics of each stage⁴⁰. The four stages are initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition.⁴¹

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Initiation

This phase generally lasts 6 months to a year.⁴² It represents the first time that the two individuals work together. In fact, all coach-subordinate relationships pass through this phase. Career functions like coaching and psychosocial function like role modeling occur simultaneously. It is at this point that most relationships stop in their development. There are two very important criteria for moving to the next phase. The coach must see potential in the subordinate, and the subordinate must feel inspired by the example set by the coach. If **both** these conditions exist, the relationship moves to the next level.

Self-Assessment-

Have I ever initiated a conversation with my role model?

Would I say that we are in a two-way dialogue or exchange?

Cultivation

It is in this stage that a majority of the career and psychosocial functions occur--- exposure, protection, challenge.⁴³ At the same time, the protégé will begin to gravitate toward the positive reinforcement coming from the mentor. The positive climate

³⁹ Ragins, 23

⁴⁰ Kram, interview with the author, Boston, MA, 5 December 2001 She states that knowing the phases is valuable for individuals to assess where “we are together in a relationship.”

⁴¹ This research by Kram in *Mentoring at Work* (1985) is summarized well in Hill, “Beyond the Myth of the Perfect Mentor,” 3

⁴² Kram, *Mentoring at Work*, 49.

⁴³ Ibid, 49.

increases the chance that “the audience is listening.” Finally, as the protégé believes that the mentor is genuine and sincere, there is a much more likely exchange of ideas and questions. A protégé is more likely to “open up” and express concern. In addition, there is greater chance for the mentor to share “privileged” information beyond the normal “public information.”⁴⁴

Separation

Once the relationship has grown, usually over a period of years, it enters into an “awkward” stage. There is usually a physical change in the mentor-protégé relationship, as one has moved onto another position. Generally, there will be a period when the protégé will “distance” him/herself from a mentor to establish his own identity.

This is the final gate of the relationship. If the two are able to pass through this stage, then reunite later, a true classical mentor-protégé relationship emerges. There is now a genuine interest in both parties, separate from position or authority, in which both has an interest in the other. The relationship could linger in this stage with very little maintenance applied. An occasional phone call or e-mail may be all that is necessary.

Self-assessment-
When I have a conflict
between work and family,
whom will I ask for
guidance?
Who do I think can
empathize?
Whom do I trust?

Redefinition

Finally, as effort and maintenance occurs the relationship redefines itself. At this point, the mentor-protégé relationship looks more like a friendship. Late in the relationship, the two appear as peers. Generally, this occurs in few relationships and is not apparent until perhaps decades have passed.

In the Kram model, we discussed how a relationship moves into a cultivation phase. There are certain responsibilities that a protégé must perform in order for a relationship to develop. Physical separation strains the relationship. The protégé must realize that they could be just one of many protégé that work under one certain mentor. Therefore, it is unlikely that the mentor will initiate the steps necessary to maintain the communication between the two parties. A protégé can maintain a relationship through e-mails, letters, and short visits. The protégé must realize his/her unique place in the overall grand scheme or network of the mentor (Figure 2- Interrelatedness of Mentoring and Networking). Studies point out the almost “exclusive role”⁴⁵ a protégé plays in maintaining a relationship overtime.

⁴⁴ Hill, “Beyond the Myth of the Perfect Mentor,” 4.

⁴⁵ Thomas A. Kolditz, Scott A. Peterson, Heidi H. Graham, “Feedback Seeking Behavior and the Development of Mentor-Protégé Relationships,” West Point, NY, 1

Putting it all together

We now return to the original dilemma of leader development. How do you put it all together and combine diversity into your lifetime of learning? Figure 3 illustrates how all the various career and psychosocial functions overlay a traditional 3 phase mentor-protégé relationship. As the relationship progresses, fewer and fewer relationships make it to the next level. Though there is a great deal more overlap than the figure can show, it does depict the transition a relationship might pass through.

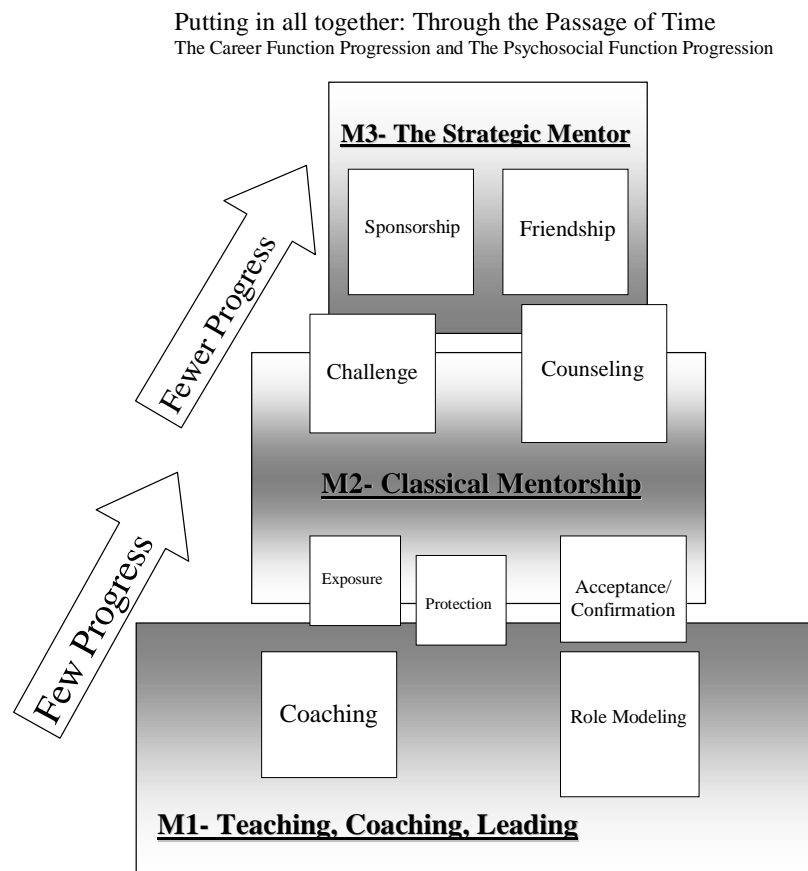


Figure 3- Career and Psychosocial Functions through a Career

Step 4- Observe mentoring Rules of Engagement ROE/Etiquette

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As retired NATO commander General Wes Clark points out in the introduction to his new book *Waging Modern War*, there is no “lateral entry” in our leader development process⁴⁶. The quality of our leaders tomorrow reflects of our leader development process of today. It is important that a person recognizes his/her place in the larger context of the entire leader development system. Fully understanding the Rules of Engagement (ROE) and etiquette will enhance the benefits of a mentoring relationship.

To achieve the fullest potential of all career and psychosocial functions, a protégé must understand the need to give back more than he got from a relationship. Like any friendship, to only be taking from the relationship will doom it to failure. A protégé must be willing to publicly acknowledge his mentors. She must be able to speak well of mentors, even if it means defending them when they might fall out of grace. Loyalty is a necessary component to maximize sponsorship and friendship. When a sponsor publicly puts his reputation behind yours, it is only natural that you would do the same. Eventually, the word is going to get back to the sponsor. In addition, when it does, it will serve to reinforce an already great relationship or it could spell its demise. That all depends on how much your give back relative to how much you take out.

Application is another ingredient in understanding what a mentor looks for in a protégé. Time and energy are precious resources. There is nothing more frustrating than an unresponsive protégé. This will often prevent a relationship from cultivating.

Self-Assessment-
Am I *using* my mentor? Do I
correspond only to ask a favor?

A mentor looks for loyalty in a protégé. As times progresses, if it appears that a protégé is using or exposing information that mentor revealed in private, there is little chance the relationship will continue. Analogous to money, the life experiences and lessons learned by a mentor are valuable. To be giving away information to the mentor’s peers is not productive to the relationship. This in no means implies that a protégé can only have one mentor; on the contrary having many is encouraged. However, in private conversations, it is critical that private matters stay that way.

Ask yourself the following questions:

Am I using my mentor?
Do I fake sincerity? Is this just a charade?
Am I embarrasses for any reason to associate my name with my sponsor?
Do I ignore the advice given to me?
Have I grown tired of listening to the same “war stories?”

⁴⁶ General (Retired) Wesley K. Clark, introduction to *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo and the future of combat*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), introduction.

If you answered, “yes” to any of these questions it is time for serious self-reflection. There is nothing wrong with going back to Step 1 (*Become Aware of Your Strengths and Weaknesses*) or Step 2 (*Understand Your Potential Mentor--- then seek him or her out*) and starting over. In fact, starting over might be a good thing. The worst thing a person can do is waste the time of either party involved. It is proper mentoring etiquette to drift away from an ineffective relationship.

If you want it to survive— work at it. If you do not think it has potential— start over.

Step 5- Transition yourself as a mentor for others

Finally, as an individual, a protégé should recognize that someday she could be a potential mentor. Though it is a gradual change, every career turn there is a greater chance for every leader to influence those below him or her. By remembering the concepts displayed by the best mentors, the protégé can turn and continue the tradition of quality military mentorship. In addition, there will be various phases in a person’s life where they will serve as a mentor and protégé simultaneously in different arenas.

In addition, as a follower becomes a leader there is an increased chance that he/she can affect the cultural of mentorship in an organization. There are certain responsibilities that a person has to ensure that an organization can leverage the benefits of a mentoring climate. By fostering the proper environment, a leader can increase the amount of organizational learning that occurs. It is incumbent on the leaders to set the tone for an organization—“Few leaders understand the depth of commitment required to build a learning organization.”⁴⁷ Finally, increasing developmental networks enhance the social capital of a group.

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On rewarding leader development:

“We must identify and promote those among us who mentor subordinates and afford them ample opportunity to exercise initiative, make mistakes and grow while they fulfill their desire to serve.”

*Thomas E. White Jr.,
Secretary of the Army*

Foster an Environment that Promotes Mentorship

Educate the Organization

Teach the definitions and terms of Mentorship

A leader of an organization must recognize the barriers present that would inhibit mentorship to flourish. A leader must mandate the

⁴⁷ Peter Senge, “Learning Leaders,” *Executive Excellence* (Provo: Nov 1999), 13. Peter Senge is Director, Organizational Learning Center at MIT and author of *The Fifth Discipline* and *The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*

education of mentorship and brief the principles as explained in this paper. Senior leaders, as well as newly commissioned officers and pre-commissioned cadets, need periodic training in mentorship doctrine reminders to educate the force. It is important to not assume that everyone has a common understand of how to mentor. In any organization, “some are naturals and some need more self-reflection” to achieve their potential.⁴⁸

Provide tools for Self Assessment

Leaders must provide self-assessment tools that evaluate the whole person like a 360 Degree assessment or a Meyers-Briggs type evaluation. For any subordinate to seek a meaningful relationship, they must first understand their initial needs.

Recognize the importance of diversity

Researchers in the academic and professional world propose, “Structuring diverse work teams that span departmental and hierarchal lines... increasing informal opportunities for networking and interactions among diverse groups of potential protégés and mentors.”⁴⁹ For military, this is not a large leap for organizations that already structure their administration and decision making on large groups of diverse background, branches, ages, pay-scale, and experience.

Encourage Voluntary Participation

This paper has discussed the distinct phases that a relationship passes through. It also lays out numerous career and psychosocial functions that a mentor performs. A mentoring relationship is too highly complex in nature to be mandated.⁵⁰ Uniformed Code of Military Justice can ensure a climate that respects the rank, but only quality leadership insures respect for the individual.

The concepts discussed include matters of trust, confidence, loyalty, and respect. They are the building blocks to a classical mentorship. A person cannot fake these foundations in a relationship. Critics of mentorship often do not understand how complex it is to achieve the delicate balance of give and take between a mentor and protégé. People trying to mandate it, recognize its merit but fail to understand the different dimensions of a mentoring relationship as it moves along through a career. The current version of FM 22-100, *Army Leadership* describes mentorship as a mandatory event for “everyone” subordinate to a commander.⁵¹ An additional benefit of this

⁴⁸ Kram, interview.

⁴⁹ Ragins, 23.

⁵⁰ Ragins, 22. She describes the research of Chao, et al, 1992, that “formally assigned relationships may be less effective than informally developed relationships.”

⁵¹ US Army FM 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: GPO, July 1990 and August 1999): Chapter 5 describes mentoring, “Mentoring (in the Army) is the proactive development of each subordinate through observing, assessing, coaching, teaching, developmental counseling, and evaluating that results in people being treated with fairness and equal opportunity. Mentoring is an inclusive process (not an exclusive one) for **everyone** under a leader’s charge” (emphasis added)

voluntary nature is the fact that developmental learning is free⁵². In the proper context, developmental learning will occur simply when two people are connected. Technology even enables us to do this more often than just face-to-face. People can now exchange ideas in e-mail, phone, and teleconference if needed. Nonetheless, there still needs to be positive incentives to encourage mentorship. An organization can reward peopling for investing their time.⁵³ In a more formal sense, organizations can make efforts to promote those within the organization that show a propensity to develop subordinates.⁵⁴

Build Social Capital

Recognize the benefits of building developmental networks

In his book, *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam, professor of public policy at Harvard University, makes an argument for the importance of social capital in an organization. "Social capital refers to the collective value of all "social networks" [who people know] and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other ["norms of reciprocity"]."⁵⁵ In a military context, social capital is that intangible distinct common in so many successful units. It is hallmark of a flexible, dynamic, and effective organization.

Similar to increasing the Social Capital, there is an even greater chance in increasing the organizational learning in a dynamic situation.⁵⁶ The important challenge for the leader is to determine how "the positive consequences of social capital—mutual support, cooperation, trust, institutional effectiveness—can be maximized and the negative manifestations [cloning, favoritism, brown-nosing,] ... minimized."⁵⁷ As the military strives to find the best model for leader development, mentorship provides an example of another way to increase the overall effectiveness of the organization.

On the benefits of mentoring:

"One of the greatest characteristics, like all developmental learning, is that learning through mentorship is FREE."

Kathy Kram

Author of *Mentoring at Work:
Developmental Relationships in
Organizational Life*

⁵² Kathy Kram, interview with the author, Boston, MA, 5 December 2001

⁵³ Kram, interview.

⁵⁴ White, Secretary of the Army Thomas E. Jr., "Toward a 21st-Century Army" *The Green Book*, AUSA, The Association of the U.S. Army, (OCT 2001), 18

⁵⁵ <http://www.bowlingalone.com/socialcapital.php3>. From the website about his book, "What does "social capital" mean? The central premise of social capital is that social networks have value. Social capital refers to the collective value of all "social networks" [who people know] and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other ["norms of reciprocity"].

⁵⁶ Kolditz, 3.

⁵⁷ Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000): 22

Mentorship and the Military Leader Development Model

Every unit in the military should be concerned at all times with leader development. In some form, each service has three pillars of leader development--institutional, experience based, and self-development. The commander should consider how mentorship serves as the glue to tie all three areas together in the leader development of each member in the organization. William Gillespie argues that the military must do a better job of weaving a more connected theme into leader development doctrine and self-development⁵⁸. Program initiatives such as the Air Force "Developing Aerospace Leaders" (DAL) are a concentrated attempt at combining the all three components of the leader development model.⁵⁹ Mentoring can serve as the glue to all the components together and provide a clear picture for the officer throughout his career.

Institutional Development

Institutional education is "classroom" education, and it generally occurs away from an operational assignment, but can occur in some context inside a unit.

Experience Based Development

Experience based learning is "on-the-job-training." Since a classroom environment cannot simulate the challenges that will occur in a real assignment, leaders match subordinates with more experienced coaches who guide them along through the learning process.

Self-Development: Life Long Development

The final pillar in our leader development model is self-development. Unfortunately, leaders relegate self-development to "free time" and provide little structured guidance for how to do it. Leaders like General Patton, who spent countless hours reading and studying his craft, provide an example of those who succeed after tremendous self-development.⁶⁰ The questions remain, "What do you read?" Moreover, what does one read? The answer is simple--- a mentor guides the development through suggestion and recommendation.

For any officer who enters into a "mentoring" style relationship, having someone help explain the linkages between the different areas of leader development is critical. Instead of a 3-pillar approach of distinct areas, the three areas of leader development should draw closer together to help explain how they relate.

⁵⁸ William Gillespie, "Teaching the Circumference of Army Leadership," *Military Review*, 81, (September-October 2001), 5

⁵⁹ Major Thomas R. Krueuser, USAF, Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) Commander's Action Group, telephone conversation with the author, 17 December 2001. MAJ Krueuser gave an overview of DAL and how it is attempting to create a strategy for grooming future Air Force Aerospace Leaders.

⁶⁰ Brian H. Sobel, *The Fighting Pattons*, (Dell: New York, 1997): 57

Conclusion

Mentorship is a voluntary component of self-development. It promises no reward of riches or guaranteed promotion for those officers who participate. It lacks common definition among the military and civilian sectors. However, there is little doubt that mentorship can provide a positive impact on any professional or personal career.

At any age, there is always an opportunity for entering into a mentoring relationship. Though some argue that it is nothing more than office politics, there are several distinct functions that mentoring serve in both career and psychosocial arenas.

Being able to recognize the need for self-improvement is first step in entering a mentoring relationship. Understanding the definitions and concepts of mentorship empower a person to know where they stand in each developmental network. Since maintenance in a relationship comes from the protégé, it is critical to know the proper stage. Early stages require little more than a keen interest, yet later stages require routine engagement and familiarity. Seeking diversity increases the depth of a person's understanding of the issue. It also serves to provide a toolbox of skills larger than most since it operates outside the traditional characteristics of a homogeneous relationship.

As a career progresses, there is an increasing chance that a former protégé will become the mentor of an aspiring new talents. Leaders that understand the concepts of mentorship can foster positive command climates in their own units. Climates that support the principles of mentorship tend to have more mentoring relationship.

Whether the goal is individual self-development or overall unit effectiveness, mentorship provides the missing link lacking for so many. It provides the invisible glue that brings people together all across an organization. Without mentorship, a person *can* complete a satisfactory career. However, mentorship brings a richness to any person or organization that goes above any attempt to measure it. Mentorship is a combat multiplier

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